Reviewer's report

Title: Rapid Progress or Lengthy Process? Electronic Personal Health Records in Mental Health

Version: 1 Date: 4 July 2011

Reviewer: Erik Andersson

Reviewer's report:

This article highlights potential problems using ePHRs in mental health. Overall, the aim of this article is interesting and it has a clear scientific value. I would therefore recommend it for publication. I have some comments which could be considered as discretionary revisions:

1. The language is elegantly written but sometimes a bit to esoteric. For the non native English speaker (such as me), it is sometimes hard to grasp what the authors really tries to say in some sections. My general recommendation is therefore that authors tries to make the MS somewhat more straightforward and use more simplistic language. One example of a sentence I had to read three times before I understood it was on p 3 “Much of the information on electronic records comes from general medical care and therefore cannot be assumed necessarily to relate to people who have mental health difficulties, given the sensitivities and potential for stigma and discrimination that can surround electronic information storage and exchange in regard to those with psychiatric diagnoses”. Another sentence I had to read twice is on p 5 ”The field of mental health has traditionally been viewed as a special case when it comes to patient inclusion, and has often been exempted from calls to improve selfdetermination in health decisions amongst the general population”. You could make these sentences more plain and simple, perhaps less elegant but much friendlier for the non native English reader.

2. P 2 background: The authors say "Apart from major set backs, such as the UK NHS Connecting for Health computer system...". I am not familiar with this. What is it and why was it unsuccessful? The authors assume here that the reader has knowledge in this which probably most non UK academics do not have. Please tell the reader a little bit more about UK NHS Connecting for Health computer system. Is this the same thing as "Health Space"?

3. P 3 r 4: You have already defined ePHRs on p2 second section

4. P 3. Second section. I miss a clear definition on what a “member” really is. Is it the health care professionals, patients or both?

5. On P3 you say "The US government is equally enthusiastic and has invested in a $19 billion programme to improve health information technology and electronic health records in particular". Does this mean that the US government also has identical aims (i.e. increase empowerment and allow the patient more
engagement in their treatment options)? Or do you just refer to that they have invested a lot of money in it?

6. On P 7 you say that there is a vale for granting greater access to clinical information. If I understand you correctly you refer to the patient preferences as a value? Please define what kind of value you refer to here.

7. P8. My recommendation is that you refer back to the specific population which I assume is people with delusions or paranoia.

8. P9-10: Please report sample size and attrition rates on the Warner et al. study

9. P11: Please expand more on the successful participatory research you refer to. This is too interesting just making a reference without a more detailed description.

**Level of interest**: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**: Acceptable

**Statistical review**: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests**: I declare that I have no competing interests